

KATHERINE AND HENRY: ENGLAND'S DRAMATIC DUO

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Most people are aware of Henry VIII's callous treatment of his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, whom he eventually divorced, but Henry and Katherine's early years of marriage promised a happier outcome than what eventually occurred. If we are to believe his letter to Katherine's father, Ferdinand, Henry did love her in the beginning: "If I were still free, I would choose her for wife before all others" (qtd. in Mattingly 126). Whatever their private lives, the couple's public relationship in the early part of Henry's reign displayed an easy cooperation, which allowed them to exchange public roles freely during civic ceremonies. One role, which Henry VIII was apparently comfortable relinquishing, was that of host during a number of special banquets. By filling in for her husband, Katherine allowed Henry to abdicate his usual kingly duty to experiment with alternative roles. Scholars have formed opinions on what Henry's participation in court revels and tournaments communicated about his leadership, but no one has ever written about how this participation affected Katherine's leadership role. By leaving the chair of estate to Katherine, Henry gave her ceremonial authority during the banquets. These occasions served as rehearsals for the year when Katherine literally took over for her husband while he was off waging war with France. In this essay I will address the question of why the role of host was so important, examine some of these occasions when Katherine acted as host in the early years of their marriage, and finally explore the ramifications of Katherine's ceremonial role and how it prepared her to rule England in Henry's absence and may even have prepared England for a queen.

The Importance of the Host

According to Michael Thompson, the medieval hall was "not a communal building but belong[ed] to an individual with authority and [could] be used for a variety of purposes, principally feasting or

entertaining and to meet any other needs that may arise" (4-5). It was also the largest room in a noble's household, and, as Thompson implies, those who ate, played, and even slept in this space were there by authority of the owner who presided over it. From the early Anglo-Saxon era it was traditional for the king or the head of a great household to eat daily in the great hall with his or her guests, tenants, and household staff (Wright 30-35).¹ The nobility, who were the focal point of hall activity, ate their meals on the dais or high table at one end of the hall opposite the main entrance.

The Rules of Robert Grosseteste (1240-42), one of the earliest documents on estate management, included a section on hall etiquette. Although written centuries before the Tudor dynasty, this explanation of household and estate government became "so widely known and valued" that it "won a place among the didactic treatises *par excellence*" (Oschinsky 4). Dorothea Oschinsky writes that the *Rules* were compiled in French for the Countess of Lincoln from a set of rules originally written in Latin by Robert Grosseteste for his household. It is her belief that an unknown author probably expanded the section on estate management, although Grosseteste is credited in the introduction as the sole author (5). Whether one or two people wrote this treatise, the more important fact remains that the section dealing with the household was translated into English in the fifteenth century, when an interest in such texts "on household ceremony came into favour" (6). Therefore, the rules that provided guidelines for the Countess of Lincoln still resounded for the nobility during the time of Henry VII and his son, Henry VIII.²

The Rules of Robert Grosseteste includes instructions on how the owners of a medieval estate should most effectively present their authority to those dining in the great hall. Because the hall was their property, all who were invited into this space were there by the noble family's permission. One significant point revealed in the *Rules* was the significance of the host's presence in the great chamber:

Order that your knights, and chaplains, your household officers and your gentlemen receive and honour, everywhere and in your presence or absence, with good manners, hearty cheer, and good service to all those whom they perceive—by

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your word or mien—to be specially welcome and whom you would wish to have specially honoured. And by such behavior your household can in particular prove that your wishes are theirs. Make special efforts to eat as far as possible except for reason of sickness and fatigue, in the dining hall before your people because you may be sure that from it great benefit and honour will come to you. (405-07)

As the *Rules* states, the lord and lady of a great household are constantly under scrutiny at mealtime by their officers and guests. Grosseteste specifically states that a lord's manner as well as his words identify to everyone present those people whom he holds in special esteem. Through observing the noble's demeanor, the household staff understands whom they should favor.

In addition, the *Rules* also instructs the lord of an estate how to demonstrate his power through his generosity. Specifically, Grosseteste suggests that the lord (or lady) take more food than he can possibly eat in order to demonstrate the magnificence of his household. The *Rules* directs the lord to take the excess from his own plate and give it to those seated around him and to "whom else it please you," so that he might persuade those seated in the hall (the audience) what a generous host he is. The *Rules* further charges that it is necessary for lord or lady to "be seated at all times in the middle of the high table, that your presence as lord or lady is made manifest to all" (403), thereby making each act of generosity apparent to all.

Such treatment of acts of largesse as performance demonstrates that hosts and hostesses of great noble houses were conscious their movements were being watched and that they purposely chose their movements to influence their audience and gain its loyalty. In performative terms, the hall was the theater where the qualities of a host's rulership (such as magnificence or authority) were performed. A later writer, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), refers to "Every mans proper Mansion house and home" as "the theatre of his Hospitality" (qtd. in Heal 6). It is here in their home, specifically in the public hall, that men and women of the aristocracy could show others their magnificence, dignity, and power.

Furthermore, the host and hostess of a great hall were not the only ones being watched; the host and hostess also watched those dining with them. The *Rules* states not only that by sitting in the center of the high table a lord might be better seen but also that “you may see plainly on either side [of the hall] all the service and all the faults. And take care that you have every day at mealtime two men to supervise your household while you are at table and be sure that this will earn you great fear and reverence” (Grossteste 403). Sitting center stage then not only allowed the diners to see their host, but the host could also see and regulate all the activity of the hall. To the traditional hall officers such as the Lord Steward, who was in charge of the hall, Henry VII added the Yeomen of the Guard in 1485 to serve as the sovereign’s personal bodyguard and accompany him wherever he went.³ Hosting thus also involved, to some extent, the maintenance of order.

When Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon sat on the dais, then, watching court revels, we may confidently assume that they knew they were being watched themselves. Consequently, when Henry VIII allowed Katherine to hold the chair of estate for him while he danced, he understood that he was sharing his ceremonial power with her. Her presence there sustained his authority in the hall.

Specific Occasions when Katherine Hosted Major State Events

Although the tradition of dining daily in the public hall was no longer followed during the early Tudor reign, Henry VII and Henry VIII appreciated the opportunity that dining in the public hall for special state and holiday occasions provided them. There they could perform their authority as well as their magnificence to an entire nation.⁴ Edward Hall, writing about the festivities of 1517, reminds us that when Katherine and Henry dined in the great hall they were following an “old custome”:

This yere the king kept his Christmas at his maner of Grenewiche, & on the xii night, according to the old custome, he & the quene came into the hall....(585)

Here, just as the great lords had done in early Anglo-Saxon days, they could be observed and could observe all in attendance.

However, Henry VIII made one important break from tradition when he secretly removed himself from the dais in order to reenter the hall or great chamber as a disguised performer. From the records that are currently known to us, Henry VIII is probably the first English king to perform on major ceremonial occasions, although there may have been at least one or two princely precedents. One of the earliest instances recorded of royal participation in a theatrical show occurred on Candlemas in 1377. Richard II, a 10-year-old boy not yet crowned king, was visited by a hundred and thirty disguised citizens "mounted on horsebacke to goe on mumming to y[e] said prince . . . with great noyse of minstralsye . . ." (qtd. in *Mediaeval Stage* 1: 394). The citizens played dice with the prince, wine was brought in, and "the prince and y^e lordes danned on y^e one syde, and y^e mummers on y^e other a great while and then they drank and tooke their leaue and so departed toward London" (394). Although young Richard did dance, he was not yet king, and it is unclear how public this visitation was. During the Christmas of 1393, Richard, now king, had two costumes made of white satin, a dancing doublet and a short jacket, decorated and embroidered with silver gilt. This may suggest that he performed in the hall, but we can not be sure (Henisch 221). The Wardrobe Accounts from the Christmas season of 1347 and 1348 during the reign of Edward III provide an even earlier record of fantastic disguises, but there is no evidence that Edward himself wore them (Henisch 221-22; *Mediaeval Stage* 1: 391-93).⁵ Therefore, Henry VIII is the first English king we know definitely to have performed in a revel.

If Henry is the first royal performer, then Katherine is the first English queen ever to have had the experience of presiding over the hall festivities. King and queen would have shared the dais, even though the king sat in a larger and more elaborate chair of estate, but because Henry wanted to be two places at once, Katherine maintained the royal presence while he went off to dance. If this was the first time that a king performed during major public occasions, then it must also have been the first time that a woman held the chair of estate and momentarily played monarch publicly.⁶ So while Henry tried on new roles, Katherine was doing so as well. Henry took on a lesser role

while Katherine took on a greater one. Because the English courts included so few women, Katherine's ceremonial hosting duties stand in sharp relief. In fact, Alison Weir conjectures that during the time of Henry VIII, "There were probably fewer than a hundred women at court" (30).⁷ Therefore, to see a women sitting in the chair of estate was more than noteworthy.

One of the first occasions when Henry VIII abdicated his traditional position as king and host for another identity was in February, 1510. Hall describes the events as follows:

On Shrove Sunday the same yere, the kyng prepared a goodly banket, in the Parliament Chambre at Westminster, for all the Ambassadors, whiche, then wer here, out of diuerse realmes and countreis. The banket beyng ready, the Kyng leading the Quene, entered into the Chambre, then the Ladies, Ambassadors, and other noble menne, folowed in ordre. The Kyng caused the Quene, to kepe the estate, and then satte the Ambassadors and Ladies, as they were Marshalled by the kyng, who would not sit, but walked from place to place, making chere to the Quene, and the straungers; Sodainly the kyng was gone. (513)

As we can see, it is Katherine who keeps the chair of estate. Because Hall makes a point of recording the king's command to Katherine, she probably did sit in Henry's chair of estate rather than her own smaller chair.⁸ This is all the more likely given that Henry marshals or seats the guests himself. While this is a job for an officer of the chamber, because Katherine has taken over the role of monarch and lord, Henry can play the servant.⁹

After seating everyone, he suddenly disappears. Consequently, while Henry is changing his outfit, it again falls to Katherine to entertain the ambassadors, whom Henry seems eager to impress. When Henry, now gorgeously outfitted, finally enters with some of his noble friends, they play dice with the guests during the banquet. Such a delightfully unexpected event was called a mummary, traditionally a surprise visitation to a home by disguised persons in order to honor the lord of the household.¹⁰ These visitors honored the host usually by

playing a game of dice and sometimes dancing. In this case Henry has recast himself as a guest by reentering his own household in order to honor the occupants—in this case, the ambassadors. Because Katherine is sitting in for Henry, he has the freedom to pretend to be other than he is.

Then Henry and his fellow mummers exit, and Henry exchanges his costume for his original outfit. He reenters and once again plays the traditional host to his guests as they eat supper. Then when everyone begins to dance, Henry once again leaves the premises along with a few other noblemen and women. The group reenter in a second set of beautiful costumes and dance together. During this particular feast, Henry acted four different parts, Lord Chamberlain, guest, performer/entertainer (both dancing and gambling), and the traditional host. Katherine, however, always acted as host, and when she sat in the chair of estate, she became the momentary monarch as well. She provided the continuity that allowed Henry the fluidity of alternative parts as well as taking on an alternative role herself.

In November, 1510, Henry VIII replicated the February feast by entertaining ambassadors “of Maximilian the Emperours court, and Ambassadors of Spayne” with jousting and feasting (Hall 516). During the second night, when Henry and his guests had finished dining, the king asked that they go into the Queen’s chamber. So again, while Katherine acted as hostess to these visiting ambassadors, the “kyng with XV others” changed costumes and brought in a mummary and played with the Queen and the strangers (516). Then six minstrels and fifteen torchbearers arrayed in costly garments entered while the king and his friends changed costumes yet again and reentered and danced. The Queen and ambassadors “moch praised the kyng and ended the pastime” (516). This time the king played host during dinner and then abdicated his role to be an entertainer and fictional guest for dessert, while Katherine continuously maintained the job of host and sovereign.

One of the biggest celebrations during Henry’s long reign occurred in 1511 after a son was born to Katherine. Henry’s joy was very short lived, as the infant lived only a few months. But on February 13 the infant’s imminent death was unknown and jousting and feasting went on for two days. During the evening of the second day, “After supper,

his grace with the Quene, lordes and ladies came into the white Hall, within the sayde Pallays, whiche was hanged rychely," and while the lords and ladies danced "when all persones were moste ate[n]tyue to beholde the daunsyng, the king was sodenly gone vnknownen to the moste parte of the people there, oneles it were of the Quene & of certayne other" (Hall 518). Though it is likely that Katherine must have been complicit in Henry's earlier games, Hall emphasizes that she definitely knew his plans for that February evening and assisted in the ruse. Henry and Katherine were establishing a pattern of playful conspiracy that gave him the freedom to participate actively in the proceedings rather than merely watch them. As host and momentary ruler, she refereed the activities of the night and enjoyed harmlessly tricking her guests as much as Henry relished constantly popping up in different roles.

Once the dancing ended, trumpets sounded and a gentleman issued out of a pageant fashioned like a pleasure garden. He informed the Queen that there were lords and ladies within the garden who were "moche desirous to shew pleasure and pastime to the Quene and ladies, if they might be licenced so to do" (518). The Queen answered that "she and all other there were very desirous to se them and their pastime" (518). This little dialogue followed a simple reception ritual—permission was always asked to enter the hall and approach the dais. Instructive stage directions for allowing strangers into a lord's household are found in *The Boke of Curtasye*. Upon reaching the gate, all visitors gave the porter their weapons and asked if they might go inside. If the master of the house was of lower degree than the guest, he left the dais and came to his guest. If the master was of higher degree, the guest was brought to him (Furnivall 177).¹¹ These rituals governed all the pastimes of the king's household and influenced the staging of the revels. Thus, when the gentleman on the pageant was taken to Katherine, who was clearly of higher degree than he, by giving him permission to perform, she participated in regulating the activity of the hall.

Once Katherine had given the dancers permission, the pageant was brought to her. The lords (now including the king) and ladies stepped off the pageant and danced. Of course, the king and his friends were richly costumed and masked. Although the audience for this

performance may have known that the king was among the dancers, Henry still positioned himself as performer and guest rather than host, the latter role willingly assumed by Katherine to allow him this whim.

Additionally, Henry and the other nobles in his party wore on their clothing the initials H and K for Henry and Katherine. The king wore the emblem "cuer loyall" or "loyal heart" on his outfit, declaring his loyalty to Katherine. In fact, Henry always included Katherine symbolically in other public events as well. Most often, pomegranates, a symbol of Granada, and the arrow-sheaf of Aragon were displayed in his palaces as well as on masking costumes and pageant wagons (Weir 15). This public devotion to Katherine exemplified the code of courtly love Henry followed, for although in all things he was a Renaissance prince, in love and honor, he was "passionately committed to the medieval knightly code" (34).¹² Garrett Mattingly writes,

Custom did not require him to link Catherine's initials with his own in every corner of his apartments and on every sleeve he wore, to receive ambassadors by preference in her chamber, to run to her with every new announcement, every new toy, to wear her colors always in the lists, and proclaim himself to Europe as the Knight of the Loyal Heart. No doubt these were his ways of telling her that whoever might take his fancy, she had his heart and his trust. (146)

Katherine was his lady of courtly romance.

During the Christmas holidays of 1512 the king once again surreptitiously left the public hall to return on a pageant shaped like a castle:

After this castle had been caried about the hal, and the quene had beheld it, in came the kyng with five other, appareled in coates, the one halfe of russet satyn, spangled with spangels of fine gold, the other halfe riche clothe of gold, on their heddes cappes of russet satin, embroudered with works of fine gold bullio[n]. (Hall 526)

The comment that "the quene had beheld it" reflects the traditional reception ritual of approaching the host first before coming into the

hall. It also implies that permission to enter the hall had been asked, and that Katherine, again playing host, had granted it.

In January, 1513, there was a Twelfth Night celebration in the great hall at Greenwich, and although it is not stated, Henry must have once again secretly left the dais to reenter on a pageant constructed to resemble a mountain, which "was set full of riche flowers of silke. . . . On the top stode a goodly Bekon geuyng light, rounde aboute the Bekon sat the king and fiue other..." (535). The pageant was then drawn "before the quene" (535). "Then sodainly the Mount opened, and out came sixe ladies all in Crimosin" (535). They danced together and returned to the Mount, which was then taken out of the hall. After the performance was finished, "the Kyng shifted him and came to the Quene, and sat at the banquete whiche was very sumptuous" (535). Again, the pageant was taken to the dais for the queen's permission to enter the hall. Hall seems to assume that as his chronicle progresses his readers come to understand the routine and he omits the elaborate details included at the beginning of his record. Nevertheless, from these early accounts we begin to understand that Katherine was a central figure in court ceremony, allowed to take on the role of monarch while Henry disguised himself among a crowd of dancers.

The Significance of Katherine's Hosting Duties

Henry VIII was eager to regain the lost glory of his predecessor, Henry V, who, during his short reign, managed to seize many areas of France and become the recognized heir to the French throne.¹³ Henry VIII was determined to replicate these accomplishments and regain the French territories that had been lost in 1453 at the end of the Hundred Years War (Fraser 133). Katherine herself urged the advantage of war because it would benefit her father's desire to take over the French-protected kingdom of Navarre (Mattingly 139, 149). Eventually, desire transformed into action in the summer of 1512, when Henry sent English troops into France. However, this first assault was a momentous disaster largely because of the treachery of Henry's father-in-law, Ferdinand, so Henry decided to lead the war against France personally. He set sail at the end of June, 1513, and because Katherine had already rehearsed the role of monarch during holiday and state

ceremonies, she was more than ready to rule England in earnest.

Before Henry left for France in 1513, he proclaimed Katherine "Governor of the Realm and captain-general of the forces for home defense" (155). Henry had previously entrusted her with ceremonial power so this larger trust came as a natural next step. She "was given sweeping powers to raise troops, to make ecclesiastical appointments (apart from bishoprics), to pick sheriffs, to issue warrants for the payment of money and generally to use her sign manual or signature to set the machinery of government in motion" (Starkey 137).

Scotland's James IV, thinking England in Henry's absence was vulnerable, gathered his army together and crossed the English border on August 22, 1513 (144). Katherine rode out of Richmond castle in early September to meet this invasion, flourishing banners of both England and Spain. She may have even worn armor as her mother Queen Isabella had once done: it is recorded that Robert Amadas, the royal goldsmith, was paid for "garnishing a headpiece with crown gold" (qtd. in Starkey 145). Bolstered by Katherine's moral support, Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, defeated James IV in the battle of Flodden Field (Starkey 145-46).

In many ways this political situation parallels the ceremonial one in which Henry momentarily left his position on the dais to perform in the revels. Just as Henry was not satisfied to sit back and watch the revels, he was also not content to give military orders from a distance; he wanted to lead the English invasion personally. When he left for France, Katherine was left to watch over the country just as she had been left to preside over the state festivals when Henry left the dais. The outcome was just as satisfying since both Katherine and Henry succeeded in conquering their enemies. Henry won for England Tournai and Therouanne, while Katherine defeated James.

In fact, Henry's willingness to surrender to Katherine his chair of estate in front of his aristocracy as well as his guests probably prepared the English people for their first queen. Katherine continued to act as host for Henry on numerous state and holiday occasions even after he returned from his first invasion of France—as long as he wanted to take on the role of performer and as long as Katherine was still in favor—thereby continuing the image of female authority. This went on for some years. In fact, it is ironic to consider that Henry VIII, who broke

with the Catholic Church in order to secure a male heir and who treated many of his wives quite poorly, paved the way for a woman to sit on the throne.¹⁴

The English probably required such preparation because the country seemed to bristle over the thought of being ruled by a woman. In fact, when Henry I on his deathbed designated his daughter Matilda as heir to the English throne, Stephen, Matilda's cousin, seized it with the blessing of everyone (Fraser 36). Not accepting this outcome, Matilda's supporters, including her husband, attempted to capture the throne for her. In fact, in 1141 Matilda came very close to being crowned in Westminster (37).

Because Henry publicly shared his throne with his first wife on ceremonial occasions and later made her Regent in his absence, people became accustomed to seeing a female monarch. Of course, there have been many powerful consorts throughout England's history, but because Henry allowed Katherine to play host and sit in the chair of state, her presence there had his stamp of approval. While she was allowing him to experiment with alternative roles, Henry was actually, and probably unintentionally, permitting Katherine to experiment as well—in this case, with the role of monarch to a nation.

Consequently, when Henry's son and heir, Edward VI, died in 1553, England was prepared for a female sovereign. Although a futile attempt was made to proclaim Lady Jane Grey queen in London, "the country rallied to her [Mary], content to allow the succession to take its proper course, even if the sovereign were a woman, single and at heart a Catholic" (196). This response was quite different from the civil war that had broken out when Matilda tried to assert her rightful place on the English throne hundreds of years earlier. There was no civil war in Mary's case, and although there was a brief skirmish, it failed dismally and quickly.

Because Henry VIII was keen to participate personally in his court revels and because he treated Katherine with the chivalry of a medieval knight, he prepared England for her first queen. Paradoxically, the king who wanted a male heir at all costs succeeded in putting two women on England's throne.

¹ Wright gives examples of the changing English household from the early Anglo-Saxon period through the sixteenth century. See pages 370-78 for the time period of the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. However, to appreciate what is going on in the hall, it is important to look at the earlier periods of English history such as the Anglo-Saxon period (29-35) and the later fourteenth century (160-81). In every case the hall is quite public and a resort for all classes. The biggest change during the time of Henry VII and Henry VIII is that the lord begins to eat in the more private chamber area, eating in the hall only on special occasions.

² The discussion of household behavior in *The Rules of Robert Grosseteste* follows in the tradition of "courtesy literature." While books in this genre discussed how the nobility should behave, they were more than rules of etiquette; they discussed the political and social obligations of the nobility as well. Although the treatise of Robert Grosseteste would not be considered courtesy literature in its entirety, the section that discusses the lord's behavior in the hall includes much that would recommend it to this genre, which was so brilliantly realized in Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.

³ "Founded in 1485 by Henry VII, the Yeomen of the Guard were the sovereign's permanent personal bodyguard, under the command of their Captain (who, under Henry VIII, was the Vice Chamberlain, Sir Henry Marney), and responsible for keeping the King safe at all times Wherever the King went, they lined the way" (Weir 65). Weir also mentions that "In 1509, Henry VIII instituted another troop of royal guards, the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners or 'Gentlemen of the Spears,' a mounted bodyguard, armed with spears and lances, whose duty it was to look to his safety on the field of battle, at court, and on ceremonial occasions" (65).

⁴ The hall area was, in theory, a public space within a great household while the chamber area was where the lord and lady lived. Though it was still extremely public by our standards today, the chamber included the owners, their staff (which could be quite numerous), and guests. David Loades gives specific information on the

organization of the Tudor household as well as the moment when the lord of the house began to retreat into the chamber area (Loades 38-72).

⁵ In Edward III's wardrobe accounts it is reported that in 1347 three groups of fourteen people wore angels' heads with halos, men's bearded faces, and women's faces. Three other groups wore swans' heads and wings, peacocks' heads and wings, and dragons' heads. Of the two remaining groups, one had headdresses of legs waving in the air, the other of mountains with rabbits on top. The headpieces for the 1348 Yuletide festivities were particularly unusual, with helmets topped with bats' wings, elephants' heads, and lions' heads, as well as the heads of wild men and girls. Various, brightly colored tunics completed the ensemble of all this extravagant headgear. This wardrobe account, in addition to manuscript illustrations, records a tradition of extraordinary headgear and fantastical visors at Christmas revels (Henisch 221-22). Of course, whether Edward III himself donned any of these is impossible to determine, for there is no record of his having done so. Although groups of disguised dancers in exotic attire are described in royal wardrobe accounts, and their pictures are scattered among manuscripts, no English king can be confirmed as wearing any such costumes or performing before his household guests.

⁶ In the daily dealings of court life, hall officials such as the Lord Steward would sit at high table, but when the monarch was in the hall, everything took on special importance. No one could sit or start to eat until given royal permission. Everything revolved around the monarch's activities.

⁷ "Many [women] were the wives and daughters of courtiers, and waited on the Queen. Others visited with their husbands, often for ceremonial occasions. Women enjoyed no formal political role at court, although several did involve themselves in politics and intrigues . . ." (Weir 30).

⁸ As Weir writes, "The chair of estate was set on a dais beneath a parver, or canopy of estate, made of cloth of gold, damask, or velvet, with a ceiler and tester perhaps trimmed and tasseled with Venice gold; its dorsal, the section hanging down the wall, might be embroidered with the royal arms or cipher and Tudor roses. The King's cushion was carried before him in procession, and any seat it was placed on became a chair of estate—the seat of royal authority. Henry VIII's first Great

Seal shows him on a mediaeval throne but by 1542, when his third Great Seal was made, it was common for his chairs of estate to be embellished with intricate antique carvings in the Renaissance style.

"The Queen would sit on a smaller chair, equally lavishly appointed, with a lower canopy" (49).

⁹ E. K. Chambers, recognizing that the royal residence was also the theater for the court masks, outlines the offices and responsibilities of the household before he discusses the mask (1: 27-70). Chambers's survey of the Tudor and Stuart household was the only general description of household government for many years until the publication of *The Tudor Court* (Loades vi). Chambers identifies the Lord Steward as the head of the hall and the Lord Chamberlain as the head of the chamber area (34-36). In this particular instance, Henry was entertaining the ambassadors in the chamber area of the palace.

¹⁰ Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter write, "For medieval England, mumming was going round the streets at Christmas after dark in a gang, dressed up in strange clothes and with your face concealed in some way, in order to enter other people's houses and play at dice with them" (83). Although Twycross and Carpenter do not specifically mention dancing along with the dice playing, there are some records where dancing also occurred. One obvious example is when young Richard dances with his lords along with 130 mummers that visited him in 1377.

¹¹ *The Boke of Curtasye* is from Sloan MS 1986 in the British Museum AB 1430-40 AD (Furnivall 176). The verse itself follows:

Yf thou be gentylmon, [c]omon, or knaue,
The nedis nurture for to haue.
When thou comes to a lordis [g]ate,
The porter [y]ou shalle fynde ther-ate;
Take hym thou shalt [th]y wepyn tho,
And aske hym leue in to go
To speke with lorde, lady, squyer, or grome.
Ther-to the nedys to take the tome;
For yf he be of loghe degre,
Than hym falles to come to the;
If he be gentylmon of kyn,

The porter wille lede the to hym.
When thow come tho halle dor to,
Do of thy hode, they gloues also. . . . (Furnivall 177)

¹² Weir writes, "Works of chivalry and romance, which had proliferated since the invention of printing, were the preferred reading matter of the nobility, and the code enshrined in them infiltrated every aspect of court life, from pageants to the decoration of palaces Henry's view of himself as a knight errant had a profound effect upon his treatment of women. Since the twelfth century the art of courtly love had governed social interaction between aristocratic men and women, and it had enjoyed a revival at the court of Burgundy. A knight was permitted to pay his addresses to a lady who was usually above him in rank and perhaps married—in theory, unattainable. In the elaborate courtship dance that followed, she would be the mistress—not usually in the physical sense—and he the unswervingly devoted servant. He would wear her favour in the tournament, compose verses in her honour, ply her with gifts imbued with symbolic meaning, or engage in conversations rich with witty innuendo" (34-35).

¹³ "The murder of the Duke of Burgundy by the Dauphin's men on 10 September 1419 showed that the mutual hatred of the French factions was still more powerful than their fear of the English aggressor. The Burgundians were now ready to pay any price for Henry's alliance. By Christmas Philip, the new Duke of Burgundy, had given way to all Henry's demands: the mad Charles VI would retain the Crown during his lifetime but Henry would be recognised as his heir and would marry his daughter Catherine. In return Henry was pledged to avenge the Duke's murder and make war on the Dauphin, who still controlled most of France south of the Loire. These terms were embodied in the Treaty of Troyes in May 1420" (Fraser 126).

¹⁴ I owe this idea to the attendees of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Medieval Association of the Midwest in Marquette, Michigan, September 24-25, 2004. Questions from the floor suggested this possibility at that time.

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